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UN denounces deadly Palm Sunday attack in Ukraine

© UNOCHA/Nelia Zablotska-Siennikov | A UN humanitarian officer inspects a destroyed building in Ukraine.

14 April 2025 | **Peace and Security**

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The United Nations has condemned the Russian attack on the city of Sumy, Ukraine, on Sunday which reportedly killed at least 34 people, including two children, and injured more than 100 others.

The two missiles struck a busy street in the city centre, damaging residential buildings, an educational facility and civilian vehicles, as people were out celebrating Palm Sunday, a major religious holiday in Ukraine.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres was deeply alarmed and shocked to learn of the attack his spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric said in a statement.

António Guterres
@antonioguterres · Follow

Deeply alarmed by Sunday's missile attack by Russia on Sumy, Ukraine, which continues a devastating pattern of similar assaults.

Attacks against civilians are prohibited under international law & must end immediately.

I renew my call for a durable ceasefire & reiterate the Show more

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Devastating pattern of assaults

“The attack, on Palm Sunday and at the start of Holy Week, continues a devastating pattern of similar assaults on Ukrainian cities and towns in recent weeks, resulting in civilian casualties and large-scale destruction,” he said.

The Secretary-General underlined that attacks against civilians and civilian objects are prohibited under international humanitarian law and must end immediately.

Mr. Guterres renewed his call for a durable ceasefire in Ukraine.

He also reiterated the UN’s support to meaningful efforts towards a just, lasting and comprehensive peace that fully upholds the country’s sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, in line with the UN Charter, international

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law, and relevant UN resolutions.

Senior aid official ‘utterly appalled’

The UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Ukraine, Matthias Schmale, was “utterly appalled” by the Russian missile strike on the heart of Sumy city, which is located in northeastern Ukraine.

“Palm Sunday is meant to be a day of peace and reflection. Instead, people in Sumy in northeastern Ukraine have been subjected to violence, terror, and loss,” he said.

The missile hit a busy street in the city centre, damaging residential buildings, an educational facility, and civilian vehicles — including a public bus.

“On behalf of the humanitarian community and the United Nations country team, I condemn this attack in the strongest possible terms and express my deeply felt condolences with the families whose lives have been torn apart,” said Mr. Schmale.

He recalled that international humanitarian law strictly prohibits attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, stressing that “those rules exist to protect human life and dignity — and they must be respected at all times.”

The head of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) office in Kharkiv, which also supports residents of the Sumy region, was part of a mission that visited the city in the wake of the devastating attack.

Jinan Ramadan shared powerful accounts of the suffering she witnessed and urged the international community to continue to support Ukraine. Our interview below has more details.

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More than three years on from the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, Ukrainian civilians continue to face the devastating consequences of war, with March 2025 proving to be another deadly month.

UN deplores deadly attack on city in central Ukraine

5 April 2025 | **Peace and Security**

The UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Ukraine has strongly condemned a missile strike in Kryvyi Rih on Friday which killed more than a dozen people, including at least nine children, and left several others injured.

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